776 §42 [791] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilimá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related: one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776 §43 Thus an elimá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (ámi jóela ináimbá). Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

[751] However, there is an antidote (mongó) against this murderous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokúsá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ikuloyámbá bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

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1. These data on the subject of the elimá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. Bongonga of Bodiaema (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

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obliged in my presence to retract his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives See also Father Boelaert, Hooger Leven, 1935, p. 60, and Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 42, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 670.

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2. The beginnings of pregnancy

The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called bofoswa. The oral expression is -foswa jémi (jémi meaning "fetus")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with balénge hooks or drugs, called lisola). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the bofoswa is wéká, that is, a cause for a lack of success (bómoto óa wéká ɛlóáte) Note that this word may be derived from the verb éka, "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's wéká is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [473] live in the same village or, as the natives say, ɔlɛ mpoké ɛmɔ́nkolɔ́, "one who eats from the same pot," and okisí ilombe ɛmɔnkolɔ́, "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The wéká brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.